1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
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ments of food, and other personal rubbish are left freely lying about. 754

Another incident, which I mention because it illustrates the pervading consciousness of fear with which many, if not most, natives are all too familiar, occurred when I accompanied Pinari and some other villagers on a journey to the foot-hills. Shortly after we had turned inland from the coast road, we met two men belonging to a mountain village. In response to the usual question as to where they were going, they said they were 'just walking'. Pinari's suspicions were instantly aroused. He showed great uneasiness until they were out of sight, and then set to work to examine their footprints. Finding the grass bent in the opposite direction from that in which they had disappeared, he considered his suspicions confirmed—they were lying in wait to 'make poison' for the people of the village of Ruri, not far from which we were. He said that if they had been looking for opossum they would have stayed in the thicker bush, and if they had been going to Ruri on lawful business they would have said so. He kept on making remarks of this nature for hours afterwards and was clearly much disturbed in his mind about the affair, even though his own people were not immediately concerned in it.

A person who makes poison is called *gonagol*. It would appear that any evilly disposed person, either man or woman, can do this if he knows the proper methods. I did not hear of any class of persons comparable to the 'witches' described by Hocart (1925, p. 229) on Eddystone, another island of the Solomon group, whose powers are inherited. In the olden days, a man caught or suspected of making poison was punished with death. Now that the power of inflicting the death penalty has been taken away from them, the natives will either 'make poison'—legitimately, in their view under the circumstances—to cause his death in revenge, or, they may report the case to the District Officer, demanding the death of the 'poisoner' who, in their eyes, has committed murder. The sentence inflicted will probably be one of imprisonment for causing trouble, which is considered not only inexplicably lenient, but also very unsatisfactory, since, as they say, 'he comes back again and makes more poison'. I have known men to work themselves up into a perfect frenzy when discussing this matter. It seems to me that cases involving black magic present a very difficult administrative problem in this area, as doubtless in others. 754 683 177